DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 166 649 CS 004 605

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TITLE Teacher Need-Structure and Instructional Preference in Reading: A Pilot Study.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference (28th, St. Petersburg Beach, Florida, November 30-December 2, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Effective Teaching; *Measurement Instruments; *Needs Assessment; Reading Instruction; *Reading Research; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Behavior; Teacher Improvement; *Teacher Motivation

ABSTRACT

Thirty-one experienced teachers enrolled in graduate reading courses served as subjects in a study conducted to determine whether simple instruments could be developed to assess teacher need structure, frequency of teacher behaviors related to reading, and the relationship between the two. A 25-item instrument was developed based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The subjects indicated the amount of their agreement with each item and then responded to a checklist of 45 typical behaviors related to teaching reading. Also, the subjects were given a list of Maslow's categories and asked to indicate with which need each item corresponded. It was concluded that the opinionnaire was able to indicate distinct motivational directions for most subjects, appeared to resist the influence of rater tendencies toward high or low weighting, and contained a majority of items that clearly fit particular need categories. The behavior checklist did not appear to discriminate between frequently and infrequently occurring behaviors. (TJ)

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TEACHER NEED-STRUCTURE AND INSTRUCTIONAL PREFERENCE IN READING: A PILOT STUDY

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This report describes a pilot study conducted to determine whether or not simple instruments could be developed to assess (1) teacher need-structure, (2) frequency of teacher behaviors related to reading, and (3) the relationship between the two. The proposed use for such tools is for use in staff development of inservice training of classroom teachers to develop effectiveness in teaching reading skills.

Rationale for the Study. The effectiveness of the teacher in developing student reading abilities has been referred to consistently in the literature as a variable of utmost importance. While speculation

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continues as to which teacher behaviors promote reading growth, a clear profile has yet to emerge. Reports of teacher effectiveness have suggested the need to look at personality characteristics, observable behaviors, teacher tasks, and use of materials in comparison with student achievement (Artley, 1969; Harris, 1968; Blair, 1976; Bachner, 1976). Brophy (1973; and Veldman & Brophy, 1974) have indicated the need to identify effectiveness in specific content or skill areas and imply that identification of consistently growth-producing teacher variables may be crucial to the achievement of the disadvantaged because the school must assume greater responsibility for student learning.

Studies of teacher effectiveness have been limited in generalizability for various reasons, such as lack of randomization of subjects, stability of teacher presentation (variation in content, etc.), teacher individualization, affect style, and classroom management practices (Shavelson & Dempsey, 1976). In addition to these constraints, it appears to be important to explore teacher effectiveness in reading using more than one set of instruments or procedures because of the complexity of measuring teacher behavior in the instructional setting. Ascertaining effectiveness in the teaching of reading requires that one examine the interaction among teacher characteristics, the behaviors or operations performed, and the response of students to these influences. Brophy, et al (1975) found relationships between clear well organized teaching, positive affect, and good student attention. Other strong relationships occurred between positive affect and student enthusiasm and between teacher-initiated problem-solving and level of cognitive behavior. Riles (1976) and Powell (1972) point to the need to look at teacher commitment to student needs and to explore the interaction

component of reading instruction, or, as Powell describes, "...the quality of the covenant between the persons involved" (Powell, 1972).

The present pilot study was conducted in response to a need to identify quickly the motivational status and the degree of flexibility and organization demonstrated by classroom teachers receiving training in the teaching of reading. It is anticipated that the instrument developed may ultimately yield information of particular importance to instructors who are presenting reading concepts and instructional strategies to content-area teachers. Content-area teachers may be more receptive to incorporating new concepts and strategies into their teaching if the learning is presented in a manner compatible with perceived need structure. Comparison of current teaching behaviors with motivational status should permit content-area teachers to add gradually and confidently to the repertoire of instructional and management strategies.

Method. A 25-item motivation opinionnaire for teachers was developed. The format was based upon the Motivation Feedback Opinionnaire (1973) which clusters items into five categories based upon Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). Physiological needs were interpreted as basic needs -- concrete reinforcers providing the individual with economic reward and physical well-being. Other aspects of the hierarchy (safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization) were interpreted consistently with Maslow's original definitions. Higher cognitive and aesthetic needs were subsumed under the category of self-actualization. Subjects using the opinionnaire circled the

number on a seven-point scale which indicated their degree of agreement with the item (See Part I).

A corresponding checklist was prepared which described 45 typical behaviors related directly or indirectly to teaching reading. The behaviors were categorized into four areas: diagnostic (D), instruction-differentiated (ID), instruction-management (IM), and human relations (HR). Subjects checked on a five-point scale the frequency with which they engaged in the behaviors as teachers.

The two instruments were administered to 31 female students enrolled in two graduate reading courses at Virginia Commonwealth University. The subjects were all experienced teachers at age/grade levels ranging from primary to adult. Three of the students were currently full-time masters-level students and were asked to complete the behavioral checklist on the basis of their most recent teaching experience. In addition to completing the opinionnaire and checklist, the subjects were given a written outline defining Maslow's need hierarchy and were asked to identify the number of the need to which the item corresponded. This was done for the purpose of assessing item validity in terms of interjudge agreement.

The instruments were scored and total weighted values for each category were tallied. Comparisons were made for four subjects selected randomly to examine the relationship between motivational profile and frequency of performance of teaching behaviors.

Results. Of the 31 subjects, 24 subjects reflected on the opinionnaire distinct motivational directions. Thirteen (54%) of the 24 subjects indicated esteem needs (See Table 1). Of the seven sub-

jects for whom a clear direction was not indicated, six gave equal weight to self-actualization and esteem needs (See Table 2). It may be reasonable to assume that this profile accurately reflects a group of graduate students pursuing a graduate degree.

Table 1.

Motivational Strengths of Subjects Showing Discrete Direction (N=24)

Need Category	No. of Subjects
Self-Actualization	6
Esteem	13
Belonging	2
Safety	1
Basic Needs	2

Table 2.

Motivational Strengths for Subjects Not Indicating Discrete Direction (N=7)

Need Category	No. of Subjects
Self-Actualization	7
Esteem	6
Belonging	2
Safety	0
Basic Needs	0

Item values on the teaching behavior checklist were tabulated for frequency of occurrence. Items which received high frequency scores (4) and (5) by 50% of the subjects were identified. No items were identified by 50% of the subjects as being performed infrequently. An item analysis by categories revealed that the subjects perceived themselves as performing a majority of the behaviors (29) frequently. Within the four categories, five ID behaviors, two HR behaviors, and one IM behavior were identified as being frequently performed by 80% of the group. These behaviors were generally related to flexible use of materials, questioning strategies, and positive reinforcement of student response.

Comparison of individual profiles on the two instruments did not provide the expected information. Whether or not a subject perceived herself as performing certain behaviors frequently did not seem to be related to need-structure for the four subjects whose profiles were analyzed (See Table 3).

Table 3.

Individual Subject Profile Comparisons

Subject Code Number	Need Status	Ratio of Behaviors Selected D	ID	IM	HR
1	Safety	7/8	11/15	10/14	5/8
8	Esteem	1/8	6/15	3/14	3/8
12	Basic Needs	3/8	5/15	5/14	5/8
21	Esteem	8/8	14/15	14/14	8/8

Instrument validity. The pilot group showed better than 50% agreement as to need category on 15 of the 25 items on the opinionnaire. The ability of the instrument to indicate distinct directions for the pilot subjects lends support to the assumption that item categories represent discrete classifications. The opinionnaire also appeared to be resistant to the influence of rater tendencies toward high or low weighting. Analysis of the data indicated that several items (4 and 8) on the opinionnaire need to be reworded in order to clarify the direction of need indicated. More precise validation needs to be established through concurrent validation with the parent instrument or by using judges more familiar with Maslow's theory.

The teacher behavior checklist did not appear to discriminate for the pilot group between frequently and infrequently occurring behaviors. Administration to a more heterogeneous group of teachers may yield different results. Reducing the number of items, equating each category, and wording items both positively and negatively, may yield more definitive responses. Incorporating "truth" items on each instrument may yield an index of rater credibility.

Discussion. The opinionnaire seems to show potential for assessing immediate motivational priorities of teachers. A quick screening of a group with this instrument could reveal the existing tenor of the group and could pin-point possible individuals who may need additional support and guidance. This kind of information would be particularly useful to resource and instructional personnel who are attempting to implement a staff development program in reading.

The behavioral checklist needs to be refined before it will be of value in indicating flexibility and direction in teaching behavior. Behaviors related to certain grouping and content-related practices may need to be eliminated if the checklist is to be used with primary teachers. Presently, the checklist may be most useful as a pre-test for teacher self-evaluation for the purpose of setting goals for professional growth and development in reading. Ultimately both instruments may serve as useful resources for determining a crucial component in any staff development program -- the feelings of the teacher.

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